

Social and Economic Effects of Urban Sprawl

Urban sprawl can also negatively affect social and economic conditions in communities in several ways (Luther 2005).

- Increased community costs for maintaining roads, school bus routes, sewers, and other services needed when businesses and residences are spread out.
- Ongoing increases in property taxes to meet growing need for services, which may pressure rural landowners to sell to developers.
- Increased need for automobiles; increased noise, traffic, pollution; reduced potential for bicycling and walking.
- Isolation of the young, poor, and elderly who cannot drive or lack access to cars.
- Increased cost and difficulty of providing public transportation.
- Increased time needed for transportation reduces time available to spend with family and friends or contributing to the community.
- Loss of agricultural and forestry jobs, and traditional land practices.
- Reduction of rural character or community sense of place.
- Increased ordinances that regulate logging, noise, or odors.

Research has shown that providing public infrastructure and services for sprawling, low-density subdivisions costs significantly more than providing for the same number of houses in urban areas (1000 Friends of Florida 2005). One study found that compact growth with a high-density mixture of residential and commercial development consumed 45 percent less land; and cost 25 percent less for roads, 15

percent less for utilities, 5 percent less for housing, and 2 percent less for other public expenditures than sprawling development (Burchell and Listokin 1996). In the interface the choice is not whether or not to allow growth but rather whether to choose planned or uncontrolled growth. With population growth and interface development increasing rapidly in the South, the negative effects of urban sprawl need to be carefully considered and mitigated through effective land-use planning strategies.

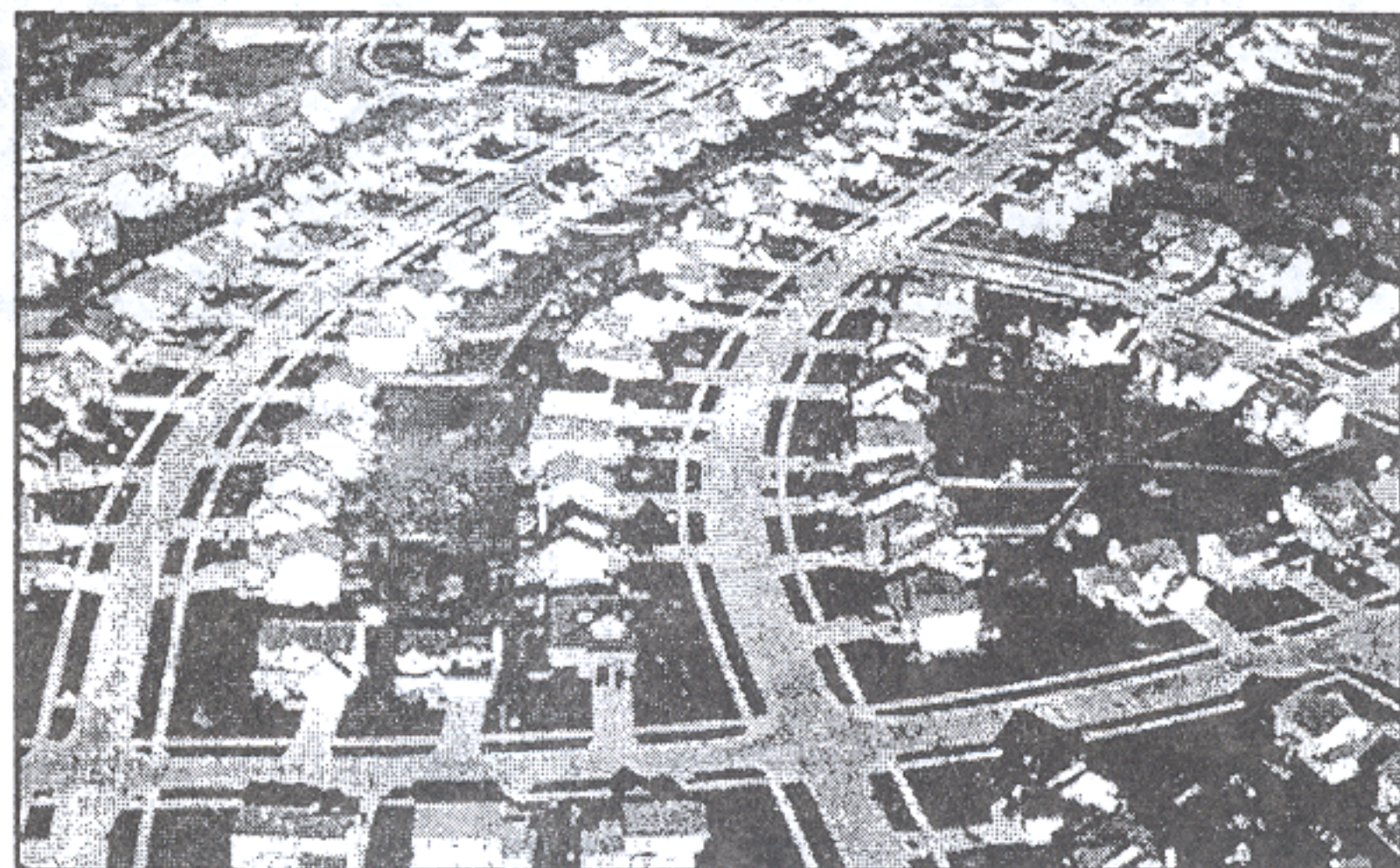


Photo by: South Florida Water Management District

Sprawl often depletes the sense of place or uniqueness of communities it occurs in.

References

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